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555 two; she increases the man's prestige because in carrying out her
581 duties as mistress of his house and representative of the home,
593 she knows by suitable attentions (agreeable talk, preparation of food according to traditional custom, hospitality appropriate to the social standing of a guest, etc.) how to win everybody's appreciation, consideration, and respect.

Furthermore, as the maintenance of prestige rests partly on the wife, the knowledge of the psychic and legal life and customs of the society in which she lives enables her to act correctly and without errors. She will maintain due solemnity in carrying out the most important acts in life, as, for example: the seclusion of young women, marriage, illness, etc., so strengthening her status. She will also rule her family more correctly and constitute herself the guardian of tradition, which is so respected by the Guajiro and in which resides the strength of their culture.

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583 The price that the Guajiro man pays for his wife includes
636 several conditions among which is the assumed virginity as he will expect his wife to come to the marriage as such each time that marriage penetrates into his psychic life, and he will feel defrauded if she does not, so much more if the status of the bride is high and even more if she is his first wife.

The man takes into account various aspects of virginity:
[554] First, he finds a special attractiveness in the virgin woman for the satisfaction of deflowering her, which, apart from the sexual attractiveness, gives him in the future a reason for boasting and prestige, the halo of a fortunate man which /66/ fills him with pride and gives him a feeling of superiority. Second, and from the economic point of view, because he has paid the price asked, convinced that his wife is a property which belongs to him, wholly and exclusively. Third, because he thinks that if a woman has given herself to another man, secretly, it was because she was drawn to him by a great affection or because she is a

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836 cabeza loco /madcap/, according to the Guajiro expression, two things which he cannot bring himself to accept: the first, because he considers that having paid for his wife, she should belong to him from years back and the thought that someone else has possessed her makes him feel that he has been defrauded in his payment; the second, because he fears this may repeat itself in the future and conjugal fidelity will be doubtful when he is away on his duties as a nomadic herdsman. This doubt, in time, becomes an obsession, and it sows difficulties in their matrimonial relations, because the uneasiness of the man may explode when least expected for any cause that fires his passion of jealousy. He is always jealous of someone, and he fills his life permanently with questions, suspicions, precautions, and traps, in the attempt to discover who was his predecessor, whose name the woman will hide with the same zeal that he shows in trying to find it out. This doubt even reaches his children, because the man feels he has no certainty of his paternity. He spies on every small detail about his wife in her behavior with the men he is acquainted with, to learn if one of them could be the father; he checks minutely the physical appearance of his child, his gestures, his expressions, to see if he can find any similarity to someone he knows, also consulting the opinion of others in order to get that peace of mind he so much desires in himself.

If the man should confirm that the woman has belonged successively to several men, he asks the return of his payment, or he abandons her after humiliating her to compensate himself for his inner suffering.

Generally, the man on confirming that the woman he has bought is not a virgin immediately presents his claim for compensation payment to her relatives. Initially he informs the father (among the mestizos) or the closest maternal uncle. The claim for compensation payment demands the immediate return of half of the property given in payment for the woman, as this amount is the evaluation of the extent of the fraud which has been practiced on his spirit and his pocket, the rest being left as payment for his future cohabitation with her. With this reimbursement

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583 836 the man feels satisfied, because the price paid included, tacitly, her virginity. If the woman's relatives do not handle the situation prudently, reprisals and hostilities may take place between the two groups. Also in these cases the man will claim the necklace which he gave the woman as a sign of their betrothal the day the marriage was arranged. But he does not do this with an eye to gain but to make the woman suffer some part of the humiliation /67/ he himself felt on learning of the deception. Furthermore, as the necklace is a sign of engagement, asking for its return resembles an act of breaking it, although, in point of fact, the woman continues to be tied to the man with matrimonial obligations.

At times the man will follow another norm of conduct, especially at the present time when this state of affairs occur more frequently and the claims for compensation payment for this condition are losing importance: He himself assumes the punishment for the deception. He roughly inquires of the woman: "Why are you not a virgin when I bought you believing that you were? Why don't you say who possessed you before I did?" He goes from insult to action and beats the woman, who, recognizing her inferior situation does not dare to protest.

It is possible that the Indian will not at first go beyond insulting the woman in private, but under the influence of alcohol the [152] resentment grows out of hand, and it is then that, in the presence of his friends, he will recount his problem and complain. Not content with this, he makes up songs referring to the subject which contain insulting commentaries and will sing them to his wife when with his friends to humiliate her in front of them and so obtain some satisfaction for what he personally suffers. In this [571] state of drunkenness it is not uncommon that he will beat his wife, shielding himself from reproach by the fact that as he has not been repaid the part of the marriage payment due him, her relatives are not in a position to protest.

Often with time the matter gets forgotten, and it only crops up on certain occasions when they quarrelsomely bring up all the past with its emotional content, due to some disobedience on the

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583 836 part of the woman, a rough gesture, or a rude answer. Sometimes the matter is settled by the woman's being abandoned.

If the woman divulges the name of the man who originally possessed her, or if it is learned by some means, the husband will present his claim for compensation for abuse, because the one who enjoyed her, without payment, made use of something which belonged to him by act and right of purchase.

[587] The economic valuation of virginity can be confirmed by the fact that a widow who refuses to live in marital life with the maternal nephews of her late husband must pay a sum equal to that paid for her by her husband, less a discount for not now being a virgin. Also, when a woman has committed adultery, the husband has to be compensated for the offense received, and a payment is then made which is less than that for which the woman was bought, as a discount equivalent to the value put on her virginity is allowed, it being supposed that this existed at the time of her marriage. /68/

The Guajiro woman who is not a virgin and is about to be bought generally prefers, in consideration of the consequences, to inform her future husband of the facts. She tells him: "I warn you I am not a maiden, but if you truly care for me you have to buy me as I am. I tell you this beforehand so you can think it over and not throw it up to me afterward, seeing that I am not deceiving you." The woman is forced to make this confession in view of what might occur later when her lie is found out. Nevertheless, she will suffer much uncertainty as she has to face this dilemma: To tell the man offering to buy her and thereby expose herself to the possibility that he will withdraw, disillusioned and goaded by the desire to find out who had done such a thing and whether she would be faithful to him in their married life, and, furthermore, exposing herself to the danger that he might divulge her "secret" on a day of heavy drinking, by which her prestige before everyone would be wrecked and no man would come forward to buy her for a wife; or not tell him and suffer the consequences. However, it sometimes happens that the man reacts to

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the situation in a different manner. He says: "The past does not matter to me. I suppose he did not cut out your organ." In this way the woman gets tranquilly married, and the husband, aware of the facts, makes no later claims, though it may happen that the price paid is lower, although this is not usual, as the man in recognition of the woman's confession shows a generous attitude.

In the case when the woman who is about to be bought has received payment for abuse, the man takes into account the intervention of the maternal family who saw to it that the feminine elements of the group were respected, which proves to him that it is a family group that insists on the law being complied with and for this reason has sufficient prestige and masculine elements to enforce it and is a group that, because of the payment he will make, will look after the security and stability of his marriage. Also, the knowledge of every one of the details of what happened (violation or marriage not carried out because of the nonpayment of the second payment) is an adequate palliative which excuses, to the Indian's way of thinking, what has occured and does not constitute a deception or an economic or moral fraud.

[684] When in consequence of premarital relations a pregnancy has resulted, the man who causes it must pay for the birth in addition to the abuse, in accordance with Guajiro tradition: a number of animals to the mother or the immediate relatives for the troubles of pregnancy and for the birth itself, which includes the pain suffered and the blood lost. If this woman is later bought, an amount is deducted from the payment, which tacitly amounts to the value of her virginity, already paid for in the sum given for the abuse. It can, however, occur, and in effect it does occur, that the man /69/ ignores the past when he has a special affection or feels greatly attracted by the woman, in which case he pays the price asked without the afore-mentioned discount.

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836 The virginity of the single woman is becoming very rare in La Guajira. Premarital relations have been occurring with greater frequency in recent years as a consequence of the social disintegration of this indigeneous group, caused by a multiplicity of reasons, among which stand out: the influence of the so-called white groups, among whom free union is common practice; emigration to regions such as Venezuela, where the Indian women break away from the norms of their ancestors and find an atmosphere which does not resent the sexual adventures of women but rather stimulates them; the scarcity and hunger in certain regions which push the inhabitants toward the urban centers of the peninsula, where the woman gives herself in exchange for the wherewithal to satisfy her vital needs of food and dress, an attitude which her relatives recognize and tolerate because, indirectly, it also helps them. The premarital relations forced by circumstances or encouraged by them have been creating a social class of women which previously did not exist nor could fit within her social organization: the prostitute. It must be noted that it is the mestizo woman (mixture of Indian with white or negro) who more easily takes this road.

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Also one has to take into account the premature premarital relations that have always existed in La Guajira and which take place between the girls and their brothers, and even their fathers, when the girls are about ten or more, when they go to the fields or the countryside in general and meet the boys who are devoting themselves to pasturing. (Cf. Chap. II.)

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836 The common type of furtive sexual relations of the adult
558 woman causes her to drop in social esteem and particularly in
178 that of the men, producing, indirectly, the phenomenon that virginity as a basis for marriage has become overvalued. Before, it was a fact that was logically expected as an essential, and the lack of this condition created social and psychic problems.

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836 Today this causes less repercussion, and the phenomena which were
558 aroused in the society and the individual have become weakened.
178 But by contrast, it /virginity/ is an object of greater search, and
the man who is successful /70/ in finding a virgin bride publicizes
it as an individual reason for prestige. Furthermore, men are
complaining less and less when their wives have not come as
virgins to the nuptial hammock, and they only make it the subject
of satirical songs when they are drunk. That is to say, they take
the matter more broadmindedly, giving it the character of an
accomplished fact and almost to be expected.

684 Violation and rape. The payment for abuse is that which the
Guajiro must pay for illicit sexual relations with an unmarried
woman, being a material compensation for the improper use made
of her and returning to the woman her position of respected spinster,
with the possibility that another man will court her and buy her
for himself, without the fact of the abuse weighing as a dishonor
in her past or having any echo in the future. It is also the com-
pensation to the maternal relatives of the woman for the material
and moral offense of violation of a right. They receive this pay-
ment because, by not accepting it, they would lower their kins-
woman, and through her all of the family, to the category of "a
dog or a burro," with no one to make their rights valid, and in
order to prevent others wishing to do the same thing to other
women of the family, which would bring the prestige of the group
to an end. Also, because the man made use of a right which he
should have paid for beforehand, to compensate the woman's
relatives for rearing her and for the social support they have given
her. The payment covers two distinct aspects of different value:
violation and rape.

684 In the first case, as it is considered that the woman has shown
839 willingness in the act, only the abuse is taken into account. In
the second, as force has been used, a compensation payment is
demanded not only for abuse but for violation, specifying that the
man used force and thereby humiliated the woman, made her
dishonor and her physical weakness more obvious, and offended

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583 177 from one or the other when the blame for any particular act falls directly on one of the parents. Each one is free to punish the children, without asking the approval of the other; neither feels inhibited about giving an order, nor is it necessary to consult the relatives of either before making a decision. In this way, authority makes itself felt in the home, is more closely linked with the parents, less liable to interference from consanguineous relatives, and less limited, making the education of the children easier for this reason and ensuring a unity of authority in the home.

Marriage through sexual relations between the unmarried.

636 583 Sexual relations before marriage are strictly forbidden in the Guajiro community except during the celebration of the Dance of the Kid (ceremony of propitiation of the rain and the harvest) when it is permitted without /99/ entailing social punishment for those guilty. When times are normal a compensation claim for abuse or usufruct is presented, or a mutual pact made for marriage, legalizing in this way the antisocial act committed. The varieties that may appear in this regard are the following:

583 For abduction, which may have two aspects, sham abduction and real abduction.

Sham abduction is looked upon with favor by the woman's maternal relatives, who, knowing about the affectionate relations between her and an individual belonging to an important family group with whom it would be very convenient to be linked by marriage even without an offer for her hand or the stipulation of payment, let the girl go with her lover without offering any opposition. After a time they present their compensation claim, and the man sends his relatives who are acting as his sponsors /padrinas familiares/ to make an arrangement with the woman's maternal relatives. They then come to a reasonable agreement, and the man hurries to pay the price arranged. This proceeding is carried through peacefully, always counting on the good faith and acquiescence of the two families, although it does have the appearance of an abduction.

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840 836 When the girl is of easy virtue /ligera de cascos/, generally a mestizo of low class, she frequently has sexual intercourse while unmarried, hiding it carefully from her relatives. She receives presents from her lover to satisfy her needs or wishes for adornment or clothes which she could never manage to obtain honorably. But she avoids pregnancy, which according to her own ideas is possible by not having sexual relations during the ten days following menstruation, or by obliging the civilizado man with whom she is living to use contraceptives.

836 It also happens sometimes that a middle-class girl, seduced by her sweetheart with the promise of matrimony, consents to live with him and keep their illicit relations secret. The man says to her: "Don't tell anyone, because I cannot buy you for my wife now. If you say nothing, within a year I shall have sufficient money, and then I will buy you. You will see best how you can fix things so that your people do not know." But on occasion the woman becomes pregnant, and her relatives, when they know about it, oblige her to confess who caused her condition, and, as we have said before, she is usually badly beaten. Then they present the compensation claim against the man. The girl's relatives feel that with this act they have been deeply offended, since an abuse of one of their women lowers everyone in the whole clan group, putting them in the class of slaves without relatives to claim retribution for offenses committed against them, and establishing a precedent before all the community which puts them in a position in which all their women can easily be possessed by anyone who feels like it, because no family male power protects them. Also, the men lose prestige as influential persons in the group and as men who are not afraid to face bravely and successfully any situation like the present one to protect the honor of the clan. For this reason, the woman who has had illicit sexual relations and realizes she is pregnant does everything possible, as we have seen, to produce an abortion, and in the majority of cases she is successful. /101/

Because of these difficult situations, when a Guajiro sees a woman friend or relative of his talking to a man, he has no

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836 compunction in reproaching her, saying: "What! Is that man your father, your uncle, or your brother that you go walking with him, talking and laughing?" She must at once stop talking to the man and submissively pay attention to the admonition, because if not, the individual in question will go to her parents' house and will say to them: "Who is this that your daughter is talking and laughing with? Has he perhaps already bought her?" And her parents, very much annoyed at her conduct, will interrogate the girl more or less in this manner: "Who is this whom they tell me you are talking to? What does he want from you?" She will answer that he is her sweetheart and wants to buy her, to which her parents reply: "It is not to you that he has to speak but to us. Do not speak to him again."

839 583 Apart from these cases, which one might call voluntary, there are cases of violation which, as we know, give cause for a compensation claim for the illegal use of the girl, compounded by the abuse of subjecting her against her will and for the injuries she may have suffered on being violated. If she becomes pregnant as a consequence of such a union, then the corresponding compensation claim will be made for the troubles of pregnancy and labor. But the action by which the woman suffered will not be made the object of recrimination, nor will it lower her value in the eyes of the Guajiro collectivity, if the payment for what has happened is paid in full. There is nothing to object to after that, either in her or in her relatives, and the child will belong to her and will not be the object either of rejection or contempt.

Lastly, it is necessary to take into account the frequent violations of young women still in seclusion by rich Indians, when the girls belong to a poor group and their relatives have to leave them alone in the hut for some reason or other. They say that, as the woman is under treatment and during this time whoever is in charge of her avoids the appearance of menstruation by means of herbs, she does not become pregnant if she has sexual relations. But if such an act does occur, the woman is taken out of seclusion immediately, and the corresponding compensation claim is presented.

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or later on if it is impossible at that moment. Sometimes, if the person died tragically, the house is burned. The reason given for this custom is that the illness was produced by an evil spirit which from then onward takes up residence there, taking possession of the house and able to continue killing the rest of the occupants. At the present time this custom is generally reduced to abandoning the habitation that the dead man occupied. They believe that at night one can feel lamentations there and that the spirit of the dead person frequently returns to that place to show his unrest if his relatives have forgotten him in the special cult of the dead. The tragic character of the case is accentuated when the person died violently in that place, in which case the house is definitely abandoned, because the frequent repetition of the scene during the night would make it impossible to live there. When the death occurred as the result of /162/ illness, and the house is not abandoned, if another member of the family should die in it of the same sickness, then it is absolutely necessary that they leave it, as to them it is a clear indication that the spirits of that sickness also reside in the house and sooner or later will kill off all its occupants. /163/

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THE SMALL FAMILY

Nowadays the Guajiro man and woman have their first sexual experiences very early, more or less toward the age of ten, but formal marriage is later for the men than the women. Premarital sex relations are casual events. The man may continue them sometimes to a more advanced age, but these also are occasional and their consequences -- pregnancy -- may

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592 836 lead him to pay for abuse or to marriage. In these days prostitution of the Guajiro woman frees the man from these legal dangers and gives him, as it does to bachelors in our society, free access to women before marriage without the attendant unfavorable consequences of previous times.

592 582 The Guajiro man marries for the first time at an age that varies between seventeen and the maximum of twenty-five, an age which coincides with his economic independence from the family nucleus. With his own livestock and with the gifts he receives from his relatives, he buys a woman but remains in debt to his family until he can repay them by the sale of the first of his daughters in marriage. Once his wife has been handed over, he begins his marital life, (some times, when the marriage has been by abduction, he starts beforehand), traditionally in the maternal home from which place, as the [591] family increases, the new cell will move to the father's hamlet /ranchería/ where the young couple will build their own home, or they will make it in the wife's hamlet.

592 611 602 The first child of this union is born, as a general rule, at the wife's home, that is, in that of her maternal relatives, and the mother is attended by her mother or her aunts, or by her grandmother in the maternal line, or when these are not available, by her married sisters. Nowadays the services of a midwife are employed. This child belongs to the maternal house as it is of their blood, since the mother is the one who transmits this quality, and even if the birth of the child is not preceded by a union legal in the concept of the Guajiro, the consanguineous tie does not differ in its transmission. It is always the mother who transmits this characteristic, and being hers and in no /164/ way counting on the father, the child not only takes the maternal surname but is also included within the kinship circle to which his mother belongs. Thus we have:

1. His legitimate feminine ascendants are his mother, maternal grandmother, and maternal great-grandmother, etc.

2. Also, the maternal aunts in different degrees are his relatives.

[124 cont.]

585 c) There is another very important fact in this sexual aspect of the fiesta that we are describing, which is what we might call proof of virginity. [125]

Virginity in woman is highly valued by the natives in spite of the fact that at the present time, due to economic acculturative factors, it is increasingly difficult to find virgins among marriageable women, a state of affairs that the Indian male is well aware of. But it is always a matter of pride and something to be boasted of for a Guajiro man to find on his marriage night that his bride is a virgin. It is the custom, furthermore, that if the man marries not knowing that his wife has lost her virginity and has the consequent disillusion on his wedding night, the bride's relatives have to return a part of the livestock which the man paid for her, especially the family necklace. The Indian's concern about this matter, which remains hidden when he is in a normal state, comes to the surface during his drunken bouts, when he will sing about his wife, extolling her and boasting of having had a virgin in his marriage hammock, or insulting and degrading her in coarse improvisations when he considers that he has been defrauded.

524 796 831 This attitude toward sex on the part of the native, or better said this value he places on the virginity of his future wives, is expressed in a sort of game which is played at the Dance of the Kid. To play it, the girls gather in a group about a singer who sings such a song as this: "Let us see, my pretty miss, if you are a virgin, if truly you have not run around too freely, if no young male has put his hands on your body." He then passes his hands over each girl's body, tickling her. He starts at her big toe and goes upward, touching her instep, calves, knees, thighs, genitals, hips, stomach, torso, breasts, armpits, and continues up her neck until he reaches the top of her head. The girl who remains quiet, indifferent, without laughing and without even a smile wins the test and is declared a virgin. The singer then sings again: "You are indeed a virgin, my lovely majayura...," and chants a veritable song of flattery and finishes by escorting her to a set place. He then continues with the rest of the girls gathered there, repeating the same routine. When a girl moves or laughs,

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representation of the re-creation of the universe, the resurgence of nature that changes and disappears, to reappear later.

In large part, this could explain the whole of the fiesta. In reality what in La Guajira is being celebrated under the name of the Dance of the Kid is nothing but a true re-creation of the world of the natives of those barren plains. With the arrival of the rains the sea of sand is converted into a green world, the dry beds of the streams become powerful streams of water, the dry brushwood is transformed into green forest, anxiety over thirst disappears, fatigue from sun and desert is changed to rest, hunger to abundance, and worry to hope in the ripening of fruits and the disappearance of the specter of poverty which prowls the sierras and the plains. It is Mareiwa, their divinity, their good spirit, who has made his apparition over the lakes of the Sierra de Nevada, unleashing storms and hurricanes and bringing the promised rains to his creatures.

But, on the other hand, the sexual acts we have just shown to be present at this traditional fiesta of La Guajira should be treated apart as they represent a transgression of the established rigid and severe cultural patterns that refer to carnal relations between men and women. As the general interpretation of the whole of the Guajiro community has not yet been finished, which could give us sufficient data to carry out necesary clarifications, we shall have to limit ourselves to noting certain outstanding facts.

Unmarried men and women in La Guajira, when looked at in its normal state, are subject to rigorous restrictions in their sex life. Sexual intercourse before marriage is not allowed to their women as the men want their spouses to be virgin. The bachelor is limited in the satisfaction of his sexual impulses by the law of compensation payment, which forces him in the case of his having relations with an unmarried girl to pay a heavy indemnity by which is covered the harm done to the woman, the offense [128] to her relatives, and the possible pains and dangers of childbirth when pregnancy occurs. And if these impositions are not complied with or if the Indian does not marry the girl, paying the price her relatives demand, revenge and declaration

[128 cont.]
of war to the death will result between the clans affected.

One has to take into account the fact that a woman who has been bought for wife is relatively valuable, and the native is not always in a position to accumulate the number of animals sufficient to pay for her, although it is considered an obligation on the part of his relatives to assist him when the time for his marriage arrives. As prostitution is so limited because of the condition of inferiority in which it places the woman who traffics in sex, the situation of the unmarried male in this respect is difficult. We repeat again that we make this statement on the basis of the facts of La Guajira social customs in normal times, and not on the basis of the present period when they are suffering from ever increasing problems of hunger, poverty, and acculturation, phenomena which are overthrowing all their traditional institutions.

Presenting the question in these terms, one can appreciate the trying position of the bachelor Guajiro native who is without slaves and without economic resources to enable him to buy a wife. He lives within a regimen of limitations and restrictions which reach even to sexual taboos which can be divided into two classes: special cases, especially applicable to the sex life of shamans, as we have seen; and general cases, applicable to the whole community and which go to the extreme of provoking curious euphemisms in the language when the word for the genital organ is phonetically similar to some other word, as in the case with the word for dog.

These restrictions must be considered in the totality of the social norms, but this is not the moment to expound on them as they will be fully covered in this review as an interpretation of the whole of Guajiro society. However, we wish to point out their presence in the Dance of the Kid, or better said their absence, since, as we have said, these restrictions disappear, and there is complete sexual freedom which permits the minstrel to caress the young maids on the pretext of deciding their virginity or loss of it, a thing that in normal times would not be permitted, and to go to the extreme of countenancing carnal union without economic or social consequences, the only

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
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bride-price. (A refusal by the girl's family to accept the offerings can lead to a serious conflict between the two families.) The deputation then returns home and informs the suitor. He does not try to haggle. That is not done. Also he has a fairly good idea beforehand what he will be asked to pay. If his relatives can afford it, the price is paid in a lump sum in cows, which is the grandest method of payment. The cows are driven to the bride's house by slaves and followed by the bridegroom's maternal uncles, who are responsible for making settlement. They are given a festive reception and return with gifts of meat from a freshly slaughtered animal. The bridegroom does not go on this occasion either. He arrives later with some cows for his mother-in-law, which constitute a reward for the bridal bed, a beautiful hammock she has woven. This symbolizes his right of possession of the girl. 584

In the old days it was considered that a bride ought to be virgin, although now that manners are not so strict, this is not so strictly insisted upon. The white man usually explains the girl's period of confinement as being intended to protect her innocence; yet she would surely have more opportunity to kick over the traces when living by herself in a little hut, than if she were with her family and always under their eye. Among the better families at least, a husband can demand return of part of the bride-price if he discovers that he is not the first to enjoy the girl's favours. A bride who is not a virgin should thus command a lower price than a virgin. A girl with a child, or a wife another man has returned, commands even less, just as with the Moors, though that is not to say that the custom came from them. 585 836

Nowadays a sensible girl tells her intended husband if she has had an affair, before the bride-price is settled, and thereby complications are avoided. A young man will seldom hesitate to marry a girl making such a confession.

A man's inmost thoughts often emerge under the influence of intoxication, when he sits in his hammock improvising a song, as the Indians do. Sorrowfully he may chant: 'Ah, ah, ah, ah, when I married my wife was not a maid.' If she was, he will sing: 'Ah, ah, ah, my bride was innocent.' [533]

water but is given an herbal purgative. Her hair is cut short. Generally several of her relatives stay around the door of the hut, and strangers and men with an eye to matrimony may look in. During this period the girl is taught the duties of married life and such skills as weaving, sewing, and making hammocks. When she emerges, stout and bleached, a special festival is held, when she resumes her ornaments and puts on the adult clothes that she has made during her confinement. She is now considered marriageable. The length of her confinement depends on her status, though theoretically it lasts until her hair again reaches the nape of her neck. Poor girls are secluded only a few weeks, rich girls up to 2 years.

Sexual life and marriage.—Little is known about the sexual life of the *Goajiro*. A certain amount of promiscuous love making occurs among the young people at the biweekly festivals. Dances also provide an opportunity for sexual advances.

There are some male transvestites who carry on only female activities and are ridiculed by the men.

When a man desires to marry he sends his father or uncle as intermediary, then pays a bride price which has been set by the girl's relatives. The payment is usually in cattle, but goats, pearls, liquor, cotton cloth, and gold ornaments also are used. The father retains the purchase price only when his first daughter marries; the income of subsequent marriages goes to the girl's senior maternal uncles. The mother also receives part of the income. A son obtains the cattle for the bride payment from the increase of his father's herds.

Intermarriage between the sibs is frequent, and many of the *Goajiro* give their daughters to "civilizados" from Maracaibo and Rio Hacha, who pay higher prices and find such a tie with the Indians useful in their trading relations.

The marriage ceremony consists of a series of feasts and exchanges of presents between the two families. The wedding night is spent at the rancheria of the bride's mother, but the nuptial hammock (specially woven by the female relatives of the bride) is hung from a tree some distance away from the house. For a period of days and even months the bridegroom leaves his bride at dawn and returns only after sunset. In this way the groom shows respect to his mother-in-law.

Polygyny is general. The number of wives depends on the economic status of the husband, some men having as many as 20. Each wife lives in her own house, where her husband occasionally visits her. The man, as head of the polygynous household, supervises the daily slaughter of animals and the distribution of meat and corn to each household according to the number of its members.

If a wife shirks her domestic duties she may be divorced and her husband may claim the return of the bride price cattle, plus their increase and